

yards, I think it's feet, of the election booth, the voting place, and the reason that was there is so when people go to the voting booth they are there by themselves, their conscience, their thoughts. They're alone with that ballot in a voting booth and they make their decisions apart from any pressure or people they may see that they are good friends with that encourage them to vote for issue X or candidate Y. This particular process changes that. It changes that. And whether or not if you read, if you took time, the NCSL sent out some research that they had done on election ballots and, though they could find no basis for arguing that there has been an increase of fraud, they did find out some interesting things. Many of the people said they felt not pressured but they did vote at a church, or they had someone else vote their ballot for them, or they voted among a group of people who voted at the same time, or they gave their ballot to someone else, knowing and trusting their judgment, and they voted. There was one case and, again, it's just one out of thousands of votes, one case where the person was so ill she could not vote so her husband voted for her. And the interesting thing about that, and I think it's marvelous that the husband did that and I'm sure there might have been some communications, I assume, but the reason that was interesting is that obviously the register or the county clerk or wherever they would check the ballots, when he signed her name, it must not have been a problem. But the point of the matter is on these issues we are opening up the process so that people can meet in groups and decide in groups and that is totally contrary to how we do government or the process of government our forefathers set up--you, as an American, alone with the ballot--and we throw that away and what we gain is more participation.

SPEAKER WITHEM: One minute.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: One of the arguments that I have is that this is an experiment. It was changed. The Maurstad amendment kept the experiment but went back to simply bonded indebtedness. That's where they'll be able to try the mail-in ballot. And I agree with Senator Cudaback, if it works well, let's expand it, but I am unwilling to, at this point, do the mail-in vote, allow the groups to take place and the potential problem of people going to the household, putting pressure on votes in that manner at a time period that we're also going to put incredible pressure on our political subdivisions. I don't